

Chairperson of the Assembly

President of IPU

SG of IU

Distinguished members of the panel

Colleague Speakers and parliamentarians

I can use only these few minutes to express my full support for the call being raised in this Assembly for promoting peaceful coexistence and fighting intolerance so as to build inclusive societies.

The dimensions of the challenges we face have been expressed by various persons who have addressed us so far. The fear amongst us is that today the world is slipping in many aspects. The increase of armed conflicts across national borders, even with the threat of escalation into a world wide conflict, including the menace of nuclear war, is greater today than it has been for the last 60 years and

it has joined other threats such as internal conflict, political intolerance, discrimination and lack of respect for minorities and marginal population, natural disasters, to take us into a highly unsettled world environment.

As representatives of our people we must lead in seeking solutions.

We have obviously two dimensions to combat the threat and find solutions.

There is national dimension and the international dimension.

My country is a very small island nation. But we are determined to join every effort on both levels.

Nationally, executive governments and parliament have to be committed to fighting existing discrimination and intolerance.

This has to be a continuous process. As a country we have found that even when we do not have major problems, where we have stable democratic governance with rights

enshrined in our constitution. We do not have ethnic or religious conflicts, There are issues that we continue to work on – one is the greater protection for women and children from domestic violence and their inclusion in political leadership, the participation of disabled persons in the workforce, and the protection of migrant workers. We have also to be alert to emerging threats. For example. We have only recently come to take stock of the impact of modern communications such as social media networks in spreading intolerance. Last year our National Assembly passed a wide ranging cyber crimes law which includes fighting verbal abuse, insults and hate speech on social media. It is one of the ways in which we have tried to keep up with emerging challenges.

Internationally we continue to add our voice against armed conflict. And although small, we will continue to do so. We have consistently voted in support of UN resolutions against the invasion of Ukraine and for the end of

aggression against a sovereign country. The war in Ukraine has justifiably received a lot of attention because of the very high stakes for the whole world but there are ongoing conflicts such as the conflict in the Democratic republic of Congo, the terrorist threats in other parts of Africa. The

We must all continue to be part of all efforts for peace and peaceful coexistence. The world can only meet these challenges by unity of effort. I am here only to pledge my country's commitment to this.